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NEWS RELEASE

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Oct. 21, 1996

UM HIV VIROLOGY LAB AWARDED GRANT

MISSOULA —

The University of Montana-Missoula's HIV Virology lab is counting cells faster and looking at them more closely than ever, thanks to a \$50,000 grant.

The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust grant will be used to purchase several key pieces of equipment: An inverted microscope to view cell cultures and monitor the growth and characteristics of the virus; a cell counter to enumerate cells for the laboratory manipulation of HIV; a tabletop centrifuge used for the isolation of human white cells from blood; and a microtiter plate reader, which is used in cell culture and immunologic assays to detect and quantitate the virus.

The virology lab, which was created this summer, is designed to meet or exceed federal guidelines for the safe handling of HIV, said Jack Nunberg, lab director and biological sciences professor. Basic research in the laboratory will seek to provide insight to guide the development and use of HIV vaccines and anti-viral agents.

"The HIV lab, in conjunction with the Murdock molecular biology (lab), gives us state-of-the-art facilities for doing AIDS research," said biological sciences Professor Thomas North, who spearheaded the application process with Nunberg.

The Murdock Trust funded the Murdock molecular biology lab in 1991; UM's Motor Control Research Lab, founded in 1992; and the Central Bio-geochemical Analytical lab founded last January.

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The M.J. Murdock Charitable trust was created in 1975 as an independent private foundation with a Pacific Northwest grantmaking focus. Its top funding interests have been education and scientific research.

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Contact: Thomas North, director of the Murdock molecular biology lab, (406) 363-9312, Rocky Mountain Labs in Hamilton, where North is working during a semester-long sabbatical from UM; or Jack Nunberg, director of the Montana Biotechnology Center, (406) 243-6421.

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